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India-Central Asia Dialogue - 2nd Meeting - Joint Statement*

October 28, 2020

The 2nd meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue was held in the digital video-conference format on 28 October, 2020, under the chairmanship of the External Affairs Minister of India. Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan as well as the First Deputy Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic participated in the meeting. Acting Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan attended the meeting as a special invitee.

The Ministers highly assessed the 1st meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue held on 13 January, 2019 in Samarkand (Uzbekistan) in establishing a platform for strengthening cooperation between India and the Central Asian countries in political, security, economic and commercial, development partnership, humanitarian and cultural spheres as well as exchanging views on regional and international issues of mutual interest and enhancing cooperation under the framework of UN and other multilateral fora. They called for building a comprehensive and enduring India-Central Asia partnership on the basis of their historical, cultural and civilizational bonds as well as traditionally close people-to-people contacts.

The Ministers emphasized the need to continue close cooperation between the Sanitary and Epidemiological Services of India and the Central Asian countries in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic. The Ministers of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan acknowledged India's humanitarian medical assistance to their countries in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic.

The Ministers of the Central Asian countries welcomed the provision by India of US\$ 1 billion Line of Credit for priority developmental projects in fields such as connectivity, energy, IT, healthcare, education, agriculture etc. They also welcomed India's offer to provide grant assistance for implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP)

* Available at: <https://eoi.gov.in/Tashkent/?pdf11775?000>

for furthering socio-economic development in the countries of the region. The Ministers emphasized the importance of concerted efforts to further expand trade and economic cooperation including promoting direct ties between the businesses of India and the Central Asian countries. In this context, the Ministers welcomed the launch of the India-Central Asia Business Council (ICABC) in New Delhi on 6 February 2020, comprising the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the Chamber of International Commerce of Kazakhstan, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Turkmenistan and the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Ministers emphasized that as a B2B body under the India-Central Asia Dialogue, ICABC should promote business linkages, facilitate greater understanding of taxation, business regulations in India and the Central Asian countries and incentivize trade, business and investment, especially in the area of Small and Medium Enterprises.

The Ministers emphasized the importance of connectivity for increasing trade and commerce as well as people-to-people contacts between India and the Central Asian countries. The Ministers expressed their continued interest in further developing the transit and transport potential of their countries, improving the logistics network of the region and promoting joint initiatives to create regional and international transport corridors. In this regard, the Ministers of the Central Asian countries appreciated India's efforts to modernize the infrastructure of the Chabahar port in Iran, which could become an important link in trade and transport communications between the markets of Central and South Asia.

The Ministers strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reaffirmed the determination of their countries to combat this menace by destroying terrorist safe-havens, networks, infrastructure and funding channels. They also underlined the need for every country to ensure that its territory is not used to launch terrorist attacks against other countries.

The Ministers welcomed the participation of Afghanistan in the India-Central Asia Dialogue. They called for the settlement of the Afghan conflict on the principle of Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan controlled peace process. The Ministers expressed their interest in strengthening cooperation for the development and economic reconstruction of Afghanistan, including through the implementation of infrastructure, energy, transit and transport

projects. They also emphasized preserving the socioeconomic development and political gains made by Afghanistan in the last 19 years. The Ministers extended support for a united, sovereign and democratic Republic of Afghanistan.

The Ministers drew attention to the significant potential for joint initiatives in the implementation of cultural events, educational and research projects with the participation of Afghanistan and expressed their intention to promote the participation of the Afghan side in international youth forums, festivals, competitions, scientific conferences, exhibitions and other joint events.

The Ministers underscored the importance of humanitarian, cultural, educational and tourism cooperation between India and the Central Asian countries. Increasing tourism arrivals, creating tourism trails across the region, making visa process simpler and encouraging investment in tourism infrastructure was emphasized. Taking note of the large number of students from India and the Central Asian countries studying in each other's higher educational institutions, the Ministers stressed the importance of ensuring their social welfare.

The Ministers of the Central Asian countries expressed appreciation to India for hosting of the Central Asian media delegation in India in April 2019, the training of Central Asian diplomats at the Sushma Swaraj Foreign Service Institute in New Delhi in July 2019 and the Annual International Dance Festival with a focus on Central Asia, organized by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) in New Delhi in December 2019.

The Ministers of Central Asian countries expressed their gratitude to the External Affairs Minister of India for organization of the 2nd meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue. The Ministers agreed to continue holding the annual meetings of the India-Central Asia Dialogue with the participation of Afghanistan, alternately in India and the interested Central Asian countries.

New Delhi

October 28, 2020
